



## June 2011 Feature Story ;

### **"The End of an Era but the Dawn of a New Future for the Blackcurrant Industry."**

The 16th European Blackcurrant Conference, held in Netherlands last month (May 2011) signalled the end of the European Blackcurrant Association (EBA).

The Conference was the most successful yet, with more than 90 delegates from 14 countries attending

EBA President, Svend Jensen, told delegates that Europe was the production base of the industry but the future was truly global.

“The marketplace demand for the blackcurrant is global and we can expect significant growth in demand from Asia, North and South America, and Australasia, over the next decade. These new marketplaces are also pioneering their own research and product development as well as demand. It’s a wonderful evolution and it’s being built on the strong foundation created by the European countries,” says Jensen.

Svend Jensen announced that the 16 year old EBA would fully merge with the new 3 year old International Blackcurrant Association (IBA).

“This was the unanimous decision of the EBA Board. We are virtually one and the same anyway and this simply formalises what was already the reality. But it means by formalising it that we all start to think globally in all aspects of what we do. It’s also a pleasant coincidence that this decision to commit fully into one global organisation happened here in the Netherlands. Because it was under the leadership of Dutch grower Franz Buisroge, that a team from France, Netherlands, Denmark and the United Kingdom, met in Dundee Scotland 16 years ago, and created the EBA,” says Jensen.

IBA President Jim Grierson congratulated the EBA Board on the wisdom of their decision and, along with Svend Jensen, praised the foresight of the EBA pioneers in creating their unique organisation.

The EBA and its values of open friendship between members, its promotion of the values of honest production and ethical information sharing, is now part of the IBA rootstock, Grierson told delegates.

“The research and the product innovations tabled at this 16th EBA Conference is a wonderful glimpse into our blackcurrant future. A future where growers and breeders grow bespoke berries to suit specific market needs, where the blackcurrant is respected as one of the world’s great fruits, where new brand champions create exciting new consumer products,” says Grierson.